

55-M

CONFIDENTIAL

Action

Control: 2983

SS

Rec'd. November 8, 1962
6:32 p.m.

Info

FROM: New York

TO: Secretary of State

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MB

REVIEWED by [Signature] DATE 3/2/83

NO: 1686, November 8, 6 p.m.

☒ RELEASE ☒ DECLASSIFY
☐ EXTENSE ☐ DECLASSIFY in PART
☐ DENY ☐ Non-responsive info.
 FOI, EO or PA exemptions _____

DEPT PASS WHITE HOUSE

TS authority to:

LIMITED DISTRIBUTION S/S

☐ CLASSIFY as _____, OADR
☐ DOWNGRADE TS to () S or () C, OADR

FOR JAMES GREENFIELD, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS FROM FRITCHEY.

THE MEMORANDUM COPIED BELOW IS BEING SENT TO YOU FOR WHATEVER ACTION YOU MAY FIND NECESSARY:-

THE FOLLOWING MEMO HAS BEEN SEEN AND CONCURRED IN BY STEVENSON AND MCCLOY.

BEGIN MEMO

MEMORANDUM TO GOVERNOR STEVENSON

UNLESS WE BRING ABOUT A BETTER COORDINATION OF THE PRESS ASPECTS ON THE CUBAN SITUATION, WE MAY YET SUCCEED IN SNATCHING DEFEAT OUT OF THE JAWS OF VICTORY. YESTERDAY'S HANDLING OR MISHANDLING OF THE NEWS CONCERNING THE INSPECTION OF OUTGOING RUSSIAN SHIPS ILLUSTRATES THE SERIOUS PROBLEM THAT CONFRONTS US.

UNBEKNOWNST TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE US MISSION, THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AT 6:00 PM ANNOUNCED THAT US NAVAL VESSELS WOULD START MAKING CONTACT WITH SOVIET SHIPS CARRYING MISSILES AWAY FROM CUBA. THUS, THE CHIEF NEWS ABOUT THE SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS IN NEW YORK WAS MADE PUBLIC OBLIQUELY AND CONFUSINGLY, AS IF THE NEW DIPLOMATIC AGREEMENT WAS INCIDENTAL TO THE NAVAL ACTION, RATHER THAN THE REVERSE.

THE UNFORTUNATE RESULTS ARE GLARINGLY EVIDENT IN THE ATTACHED CLIPPINGS FROM THE NY TIMES, WASHINGTON POST AND THE

CONFIDENTIAL

REPRODUCTION FROM THIS COPY IS PROHIBITED UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED"

CONFIDENTIAL

-2- 1686, November 8, 6 p.m. from New York

WALL STREET JOURNAL, WHICH DESCRIBE THE NEW PLAN AS BEING "CLOAKED IN SECRECY AND AMBIGUITY" ...AS RAISING "SUSPICION THAT THE VERIFICATION IS INADEQUATE"... AS PUTTING THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION IN A DIFFICULT AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SPOT", ETC. ETC.

I SPENT MOST OF THE EVENING TALKING TO CORRESPONDENTS, SOME OF THEM CALLING FROM WASHINGTON, WHO WERE PUZZLED AND SUSPICIOUS OVER THE PENTAGON STATEMENT. THEY HAD BEEN LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE RUSSIANS HAD CAUGHT US NAPPING WITH THE SWIFT DEPARTURE OF THEIR SHIPS AND THAT WE HAD HAD TO HASTILY SNATCH AT A "PERFUNCTORY CHECKING OF OUTGOING SOVIET CRAFT".

ALL THIS WAS NOT ONLY UNFORTUNATE, BUT UNNECESSARY: A LITTLE REAL PLANNING COULD HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO PICUTRE THE ARRANGEMENT AS A VICTORY FOR US DIPLOMACY. FOR INSTANCE, WHO WOULD HAVE BELIEVED A FEW DAYS AGO THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD EVER WILLINGLY PERMIT THE US NAVY TO HALT ITS SHIPS FOR INSPECTION PURPOSES? THIS IS AN EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENT IN ITSELF. THE AGREEMENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN PRESENTED AS EITHER OUR PLAN OR A JOINT ONE, NOT AS SOMETHING WE HAD TO HURRIEDLY ACCEPT AT THE LAST MOMENT. WE SHOULD HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PLAN WAS WORKED OUT CAREFULLY AND DELIBERATELY, AS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF BYPASSING CASTRO'S EFFORTS TO BLOCK ADEQUATE VERIFICATION.

IF WE ARE TO AVOID SUCH INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE, WE MUST AGREE ON SOME METHOD OF PRESS COORDINATION BETWEEN THE STATE DEPARTMENT, DEFENSE DEPARTMENT, THE WHITE HOUSE, AND THE US MISSION.

WHILE THE CUBAN CRISIS LASTS, THERE SHOULD BE A DAILY DETERMINATION OF :-

- 1) WHAT, IF ANYTHING, SHOULD BE DISCLOSED;
- 2) HOW IT SHOULD BE PRESENTED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE BEST PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING;
- 3) WHERE AND WHO SHOULD PUT IT IN CIRCULATION.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-3- 1686, November 8, 8 p.m. from New York

IF WE HAD APPLIED THIS TEST TO YESTERDAY'S DEVELOPMENTS, I THINK WE WOULD HAVE CONCLUDED THAT:-

- 1) WITH THE SOVIET SHIPS LEAVING CUBAN PORTS, IT WAS NECESSARY TO DISCLOSE THE AGREEMENT WE HAD REACHED WITH RUSSIA ON INSPECTION AT SEA.
- 2) THE ANNOUNCEMENT ITSELF SHOULD HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY DESIGNED TO ASSURE THE COUNTRY THAT US INTERESTS WERE FULLY PROTECTED.
- 3) SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT INVOLVED ACTION IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT AREAS, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MADE PUBLIC EITHER BY THE WHITE HOUSE, OR THE STATE DEPARTMENT, BUT WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF DEFENSE AND THE US MISSION.

I WOULD LIKE TO RECOMMEND THAT, FOR THE DURATION OF THE CUBAN CRISIS, THERE BE CREATED A PUBLIC AFFAIRS CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE, COMPRISED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WHITE HOUSE, STATE DEPARTMENT, DEFENSE, AND US MISSION, WITH EITHER PIERRE SALINGER OR BOB MANNING ACTING AS CHAIRMAN.

THIS COMMITTEE WOULD ROUND-UP EACH DAY THE PUBLICITY VIEWS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND COMMUNICATE SAME TO THE CHAIRMAN, WITH THE IDEA OF OBTAINING A CONSENSUS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL, BUT WHICH, IN ANY CASE, WOULD PRODUCE A THOUGHT-OUT DECISION THAT WAS KNOWN TO ALL IN ADVANCE OF RELEASE.

END MEMO.

STEVENSON

LTR/14

NOTE: RELAYED TO WHITE HOUSE 11/8/62, 6:40 PM

NOTE: Advance copies to NS and SS-D 11 8-31 1962

CONFIDENTIAL

0310587030